

Do the Ahaadith Condone Violence During Salah?

by

Bassam Zawadi

Argument:

It states in Saheeh Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 54, Number 495:

Narrated Abu Said Al-Khudri:

The Prophet said, "If while you are praying, somebody intends to pass in front of you, prevent him; and should he insist, prevent him again; and if he insists again, **fight with him**, because such a person is (like) a devil."

How could this hadith be calling for violence during Salah?! Also, how would this hadeeth be implemented in a place such as Masjid al-Haram where everyone is walking in front of the other?!

Response:

The general meaning of this hadeeth is that if one is praying and someone tries to pass between him and the *sutrah*, the person praying ought to gently prevent the person from passing. If the person insists, he should gently try to prevent that person from passing once again. If the person still insists, then the person praying should push back forcefully against this person who is doing the work of shaytaan in trying to distract the person from his prayer.¹

The word used for "fight" here does not necessarily signify picking up a weapon to fight or beating the person violently by kicking and punching him, for "fighting" could refer to any dispute.² In this particular context, it means to push back forcefully.³ This is also since the person

¹ As-San'aani in *Subul as-Salaam* stated:

وفي قوله فإنما هو شيطان تعليل بأن فعله فعل الشيطان في إرادة التشويش على المصلي وفيه دلالة على جواز إطلاق لفظ الشيطان على الإنسان الذي يريد إفساد صلاة المصلي وفتنته في دينه

² Attiyah bin Muhammad Salim, in his commentary on *Buloogh al-Maraam*, said:

والمقاتلة قد تطلق على مجرد الخصومة، فلو رأيت اثنين يتنازعان كلاماً بينهما، تقول: هما يتقاتلان، وليس معنى (يقاتله) أن يحمل السلاح والترس والدرع ويقاتله من أجل المرور!!

³ Imam an-Nawawi, in his commentary on Saheeh Muslim, said that it means to push: بمعنى يذفع. Attiyah bin Muhammad Salim in his commentary on *Buloogh al-Maraam* said that it means a forceful push: يدفعه. يطرقة شديدة أكثر فأكثر، while Ibn Hajar in his *Fathul Bari* said it means a gentle push and not actual fighting, for fighting the devil is done by seeking refuge in Allah: إنما مقاتلة الشيطان هي بالاستعاذة والتستر عنه بالتسمية. Ibnul Jawzi in his *Kashf al-Mushkil min Hadeeth as-Saheehayn* said that the person

cannot make so many moves, which would invalidate his prayer.⁴ He needs to remain in his praying posture and to do so would restrict him from fighting in that kind of sense.

As for the issue of Masjid al-Haram, scholars had said that this is an exceptional case due to the overcrowding.⁵ The Prophet (peace be upon him) was clearly referring to an ill-intentioned person in this hadith when he gave the advice that he did. He did not have in mind exceptional problematic circumstances such as the case of Masjid al-Haram and the overcrowding problem that exists there today.

Hence, the claim that this hadith promotes "violence" is simply ludicrous.

praying first pushes gently, and if the person still insists to pass in front him, then the person praying may push back more forcefully: الدرء الدفع وهذا يستعمل في أول المنع فإن أبي المجتاز كان للمصلي دفعه بالعنف. Muhammad Shams al-Haqq 'Abaadi in his commentary on Sunan Abu Dawud, entitled *'Awn al-Ma'bood*, stated that the push is forceful: أي يعالجه ويعنف في دفعه عن المرور بين يديه

⁴ Imam an-Nawawi in his commentary on Saheeh Muslim cites Qadi 'Iyaadh as saying:

وكذا اتفقوا على أنه لا يجوز له المشي إليه من موضعه ليرده وإنما يدفعه ويرده من موقفه لأن مفسدة المشي في صلاته أعظم من مروره من بعيد بين يديه وإنما أبيح له قدر ما تتأله يده من موقفه ولهذا أمر بالقرب من سترته وإنما يرده إذا كان بعيداً منه بالإشارة والتسبيح.

⁵ Refer to Sheikh Salih al-Munajjid's fatwa over [here](#), and read from, "**A number of scholars made an exception in the case...**" onward.